

WEB DESIGN FOR FORMING ENVIRONMENTAL BRAND IMAGE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today, compatibility between economy and ecology is one of the most important business challenges for companies. Forming environmental brand image can be a strategic solution for this assignment. By forming environmental brand image, companies can differentiate themselves and take competitive advantages from others. In this paper, the Web was chosen as a means to communicate environmental information with customers since it is fast becoming one of the most vital medias in these days. When companies put out environmental information on the Web, they should be aware of this issue: no matter how companies provide quality contents, it doesn't affect to their environmental brand image if users can't find the information from the Web, or if they give up browsing caused by disincentives such as the lack of usability. Thus, designing aspects are necessary to form environmental brand image by leading users to companies' environmental information and making users feel comfortable in the website. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to point up the way of Web design, which influences to environmental brand image.

2. METHODS

First, in the process of website building, some countermeasures were implemented in order to lead users to environmental contents. Then, the effectiveness of those countermeasures was tested by using Web-specific access log data. Next, two questionnaire surveys were conducted to 200 users to evaluate 3 websites. Those surveys were designed to know whether the browsing of measure-implemented site has effect on forming environmental brand image. Items in those questionnaires were in five parts: evaluation on design element, outcome indicators of the websites (eagerness, product quality, environmental care of products, environmental efforts of the company, social responsibility of the company, company management, inclination to utilize company products or services), keywords that fit website image, contents browsed, and users' interest to environmental contents. The results of those surveys were analyzed from three viewpoints as follows: 1) examine the difference of the evaluation among 3 websites using Mantel test, 2) draw some dimensions that express the image difference among 3 websites using principal component analysis, 3) estimate which design element influences outcome indicators using ordered probit model.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of access log analysis indicated that there was a lack of traffic line from non-environmental contents (product information page) to environmental contents. To solve this problem, we set some links to create a new traffic line. Those links worked effectively creating a new traffic line from non-environmental contents to environmental contents.

From the result of questionnaire surveys, we presumed that the way of Web design as well as browsing the environmental contents influence company's environmental brand image. Specifically, design elements such as images and navigations have a great impact on environmental brand image. Also, friendly and reliable site image is effective to form environmental brand image.

4. CONCLUSION

For effective forming of environmental brand image on the Web, one should take notice on those points in the process of Web design: 1) to design traffic line to environmental contents, 2) to maintain high level of visibility by using images, 3) to design a usable navigation system, 4) to form friendly and reliable site image.